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RUEHHM/AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH CITY IMMEDIATE 1147
RUCPDO/USDOC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEHRC/USDA FAS WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 HANOI 001220

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EAP/MLS, CA/P AND EB/TPP/BTA/ANA
DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS USTR DAVID BISBEE, GREG HICKS AND
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TREASURY FOR OASIA
DHS FOR ICE HQ IAO

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ETRD](#) [EFIS](#) [KCRM](#) [CFED](#) [ASEC](#) [KJUS](#) [VM](#)

SUBJECT: GVN Demarches Embassy on Belgium Catfish Arrest

Ref: HCMC 498

1. (U) This is an action request. Please see paragraph 8.

2. SUMMARY: (U) ConsChief received a demarche and diplomatic note from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on May 18 regarding the May 11 arrest in Belgium of BUU, Huy on charges of illegally transshipping catfish into the United States (reftel). The MFA requested information about the case, the basis for the Interpol notice, and that the USG resolve the matter in accordance with U.S. and international law. The Mission intends to respond by providing a copy of the federal indictment and seeks further guidance from the Department. End Summary.

3. (U) ConsChief was called into the MFA Consular Department for a demarche on May 18 concerning the arrest in Belgium on a U.S. Interpol notice of Vietnamese national Buu Huy on charges of false labeling and illegal transshipment of catfish into the United States to avoid duties on catfish exports from Vietnam. Thai Xuan Dzung, Chief of External Relations, MFA Consular Department, presented the demarche requesting information on the case against Mr. Buu and the basis for the USG's Interpol red corner notice against him.

4. (U) ConsChief indicated that the federal court indictment, if unsealed, would provide the most authoritative information concerning the charges and bases for them against Mr. Buu. Mr. Dzung requested "all documents", but seemed to understand that, given the nature of legal proceedings, the indictment would satisfy the GVN's request. ConsChief informed Mr. Dzung that Interpol notices are issued in normal course when federal warrants are issued for persons outside the jurisdiction of the United States.

5. (SBU) Mr. Dzung also relayed a diplomatic note containing the GVN's request that the case be resolved in accordance with U.S. law, as well as international law and customs. A translation of the MFA diplomatic note is provided in para 9 below. ConsChief expressed appreciation for the MFA's handling this matter directly.

6. (SBU) The meeting was delayed because a demarche to the Belgian Consul on the same matter was going on when ConsChief arrived at the MFA. The Belgian Consul later related to ConsChief that the MFA requested that Belgium return Mr. Buu's official passport. The Belgian Consul

replied that Belgium must keep the passport so Mr. Buu can travel, and that Mr. Buu's travel to Belgium was for business, not official, purposes.

17. (SBU) Mission personnel also learned that a meeting in the Prime Minister's office has been called concerning this issue with participation from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Fisheries, Public Security, Trade and the Vietnamese Association of Sea Export Products.

18. (SBU) We intend to provide the now unsealed indictment in response to the MFA's demarche and diplomatic note request. We would appreciate any further guidance from the Department on how to respond to this matter by COB May 23.

19. (U) The translated text of the MFA diplomatic note No. 333/LSNN is as follows:

[Begin text] The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam presents its compliments to the Embassy of the United States of America. Concerning the case of Mr. Buu Huy, a Vietnamese citizen who was arrested in Belgium following an arrest warrant issued by the United States Attorney for the Northern District of Florida (USA), Vietnam requests the U.S. side to provide information on the case of Mr. Buu Huy as well as the basis of the worldwide warrant. The Consular Department also requests the U.S. Government to resolve this case in accordance with U.S. and international laws.

The Consular Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam avails itself of this opportunity to renew to Embassy of the United States of America the assurances of its highest consideration. [End text]

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